

## 1. The Prayer of the Trees

Ye who pass by,  
Please hear my prayer.  
Harm me not, my bounty to share.  
Raise not a hand to strike against me.  
For I am a gift.  
Oh, please let me be.

I am the shade from the hot summer sun.  
My fruits will quench your thirst.  
I am the beams that support your home.  
I am the page of your book.

*Chorus*

I am your fuel on a cold winter's night.  
I am your child's bed.  
I am the home of the nesting bird.  
I shelter deer from the storm.

*Chorus*

I save the soil from the wind and the rain.  
I am the source of pure air.  
To all the earth I give richness and life.  
I offer beauty and joy.

*Chorus*

For I am a gift.  
Oh, please let me be.

*Based on a poem likely written by Richard St. Barbe Baker*

*Trees are beautiful and peaceful living things. They produce the oxygen we breathe. They provide shade from the strong rays of the sun. They provide food and shelter. It is sad to see them vandalized and mistreated, especially in urban settings. They contribute so much to making our communities pleasant places to live.*

## 2. Wayside Blooms

Whose are the wayside blooms\*  
Thriving amidst the wild prairie grass  
They are owned by none so that they  
May belong to all who pass.

Whose are the wayside blooms\*\*  
Thriving amidst the wild prairie grass  
They are owned by none so that they  
May belong to all who pass.

\*begin round

\*\* begin second round

*Based on anonymous poem found in a prairie flower book*

*Melody based on traditional Hebrew round*

*Native flowers are becoming increasingly rare due to loss of habitat and careless picking. Many people pick flowers on their walks only to discard them further down the path. Picking the flower means picking the stem and leaves. These leaves provide the food that keeps the roots and perennial plants alive. Without this food, the roots die and cannot produce another plant the next spring. The picked flowers cannot produce seeds that help ensure another generation of plants.*

### 3. The Walking Song

When you go out walking  
Hurt no living thing.  
Ladybug or butterfly  
Moth with dusty wing.  
Cricket chirping cheerily,  
Harmless worms that creep,  
Dancing gnats and beetle fat,  
Grasshoppers so light,  
Grasshoppers so light,  
Grasshoppers so light of leap.

Quand tu vas te promener  
Ne blesse pas les insectes  
Coccinelle et papillon  
Belle libellule  
Le grillon qui chante  
Ber de terre qui rampe  
Moucheron et scarabée  
Sauterelle légère  
Sauterelle légère  
Sauterelle sautillante

*Based on a poem by Christina Rossetti*

*Translated by Ghislaine de Tilly and Carmen Nahirney*

*Our sidewalks and paved roads create huge barriers for small creatures that move about trying to find food and shelter. So many of these living things are carelessly crushed for no other reason than that they are there. It takes little or no effort to rescue these small life forms and put them in a garden or to simply let them be and walk around them.*

#### **4. We Plant this Tree**

We plant this tree for those who will follow.  
We plant this tree for creatures great and small.  
We plant this tree for its bounty and its beauty.  
We plant this tree for all.

Much of the earth was a broken, barren land  
And no end to this waste was in sight,  
When over the hillside there came a boy and girl  
With hope and a tree in each hand.

*Chorus*

Then onto the hillside there came more of their friends  
With dreams of a beautiful world  
Filled with songs of the birds and butterfly wings  
As the trees grow and all the earth mends.

*Chorus*

As the dreamers worked,  
Ten thousand more arrive  
Representing all lands of the earth.  
As they planted a tree, they were overheard to say  
Grow strong and help our home survive.

*Chorus*

*Deforestation is a huge problem all over the world. The loss of forest cover leads to devastating floods and water shortages. We are quick to harvest mature forests but procrastinate about replanting new ones. We also fail to realize how a profit in one part of the earth creates a debt in another part. If we planted three young trees for every tree we cut, our world would be a healthier and safer place.*

## 5. The Hawk Song

Fly hawk fly, High over the trees,  
Spread your wings on a sage-scented breeze.  
Fly hawk fly, Out 'cross the prairie,  
Uplifting my spirits to know you are free.

A sea of prairie grass below  
Grazed upon by buffalo  
Flowers bloom in every hue  
Blackbirds in cattails by a willow-ringed slough.

*Chorus*

From high above you search the ground,  
Patiently circling round and round.  
The faintest of movement can catch your eye,  
But strands of barbed wire you did not spy.

*Chorus*

With gentle hands your wounds did heal and restless you began to feel.  
Then came the day to set you free,  
Soaring in blue skies is where you should be.

*Chorus*

*This song is about a red-tailed hawk I rescued. It had snagged itself on three strands of barbed wire. My wife and I spent an hour carefully untangling the hawk's wings and legs from the barbs. We took the hawk to the Veterinary College at the University of Saskatchewan. There it was cared for, and six weeks later, it was released back into the wild. Many birds die needlessly after hitting wires and windows. There must be some simple and inexpensive way to make these objects more visible to birds.*

## 6. The Rock Song

There are rocks of every colour.  
They form the earth on which we stand.  
Some are big just like a mountain.  
Some we call a grain of sand.

A rock is like my great grandpa  
With many tales for me.  
How this black slate was once see mud.  
And this rock was a tree.  
A fossil tells living things  
Like dinosaurs so old.  
Some rocks come from inside the earth  
And some are made of gold.

*Chorus*

An emerald is as green as grass  
A ruby red as blood.  
A sapphire shines as blue as sky  
A flint lies in the mud.  
A diamond is a brilliant stone  
To catch the world's desire.  
An opal holds a fiery spark  
But a flint holds fire.

*Chorus (twice)*

*Second verse based on a poem by Christina Rossetti*

*For anyone willing to observe and listen, rocks have many tales to tell.  
Rocks grow and break down to grow again. Some rocks have traveled great  
distances. Each rock is unique and has its own special story of how it came  
to be.*

## 7. Save Me Some Wetlands

As I stood proudly by my big machine,  
I was looking at a field where a woodland had been.  
Tomorrow I'll deal with that slough over there  
When I heard a voice sadly sing from somewhere.

Save me some wetland.  
Save me a slough.  
Save me a coulee with a brook running through.  
Save me a river that flows to the seas.  
Save me a northern lake reflecting birch trees.

I walked to the water to see who was there.  
There was only a hawk flying 'round in the air.  
The trees were alive with the chatter of birds.  
Again I heard singing. I remember the words.

*Chorus*

Every year of my life, the frogs woke the spring.  
The ducks return after weeks on the wing.  
Because of this slough, the wildlife abound.  
But it's sure a pain for ploughing around.

*Chorus*

I headed on back to the house for a meal  
And I saw my kids playing on some old wheel.  
I thought of that slough and a long silent spring.  
Now my grandkids and I still plough 'round  
That darn thing.

*There was once a huge spruce tree that grew beside a slough in the middle of a field. One day a farmer was putting in a new fence. For some reason he drove his bulldozer over the tree and pushed the tree into the slough. Without the shade from the tree, the slough gradually dried up. All the wildlife that once lived and drank at the slough are gone. The owls that nested in the spruce tree are gone. Sloughs are important for maintaining water levels, providing a habitat for wildlife and keeping the land healthy. Many farmers care for their land and have kept the sloughs. They deserve our gratitude.*

## **8. The Water Song**

Each little raindrop flows to a river.  
Every river flows to the seas.  
All of this water falls from above  
A gift of the oceans, the wind and the trees.

Water that thunders through mountains and canyons  
And silently shimmers 'cross buffalo prairie.  
Water that sings over pebbles and sand.  
Water that sculpts the forms of the land.

*Chorus*

Water that makes every seed seek the sunlight  
To cover the earth with green forests and meadows.  
Water that quenches the thirst of the doe.  
Water that makes corn and golden wheat grow.

*Chorus*

Water for sharing with all of earth's creatures;  
But how do we honour this wonderful treasure.  
Water that gives every living thing birth.  
Water that nurtures all life on the earth.

*Chorus*

*Water is our most precious resource on this planet. There can be no life without water. When a raindrop falls to earth, it begins a great journey to the sea. Along the way it gives life to the plants and animals.*

## 9. The River Song

Row with me my river  
On a journey to the sea  
Bring with you your gathering strength  
We'll flow in peace for eternity.

Row with me my river  
Through alpine valleys where eagles soar  
Uniting waters from separate mountains  
The river runs forever more.

Row with me my river  
As you amble through the land  
Sustaining life along your banks  
Making memories in the sand.

Row with me my river  
As through quiet woods you wind  
Then crashing rapids disrupt the calm  
And urgent waters fill my mind.

### *Instrumental*

Row with me my river  
From my soul I cannot hide  
The strength of pure emotion  
As joyfully with you I ride.

Row with me my river  
Until the end the delta brings  
Us closer to the meaning  
Of nature's wondrous noble things.  
Row with me my river.

### *Based on Poem by Nancy Tuttle*

*Rivers are the veins and arteries of the earth. They flow over vast distances as they run to the sea. Canoeing and rowing allow us to experience rivers in their many moods and to observe the richness of life found in the valleys created by these rivers.*

## **10. The Songs of the Trees**

Walking alone on a midsummer's eve,  
Beneath stars that have shone since the world first began,  
In a moment of silence  
I heard the songs of the trees.

Throughout the forest there came not a sound.  
Neither cricket nor songbird disturbed the night air of that ancient forest  
When I heard the songs of the trees.

Singing songs of seasons, from long, long ago,  
When a tree could live to be centuries old  
Thriving in sunshine and rain.

Each towering tree harmonized with the songs,  
Sharing wisdom of nature's mysterious ways,  
Sad and joyful melodies  
While I heard the songs of the trees.

What a world this could be  
If we all heard the songs of the trees.

*The ancient Greeks believed that trees held spirits called nymphs. In North America the first people of the west coast believed that the spirits of their ancestors lived in trees. Poets, who have experienced the stillness of the forest, have written about hearing the songs of the trees. Sometimes these songs are joyful, but sadder and fewer songs are heard nowadays. Some say that science has driven the nymphs from the forest. Science has also shown us that the oldest and largest living things on earth are trees.*

**Cree/English Vocals  
Tyrone Tootosis**

*As you listen to Songs of the Trees, imagine yourself walking through meadows and woods. Along the trail you will hear a variety of nature sounds and the voices of ten different children's choirs. Listen for a soaring hawk, a pond of frogs, a flock of geese and a host of other creatures. Rest awhile on a fallen log and sign along with one of the choirs before moving on and wonder what you will discover around the next bend in the path. Maybe you will hear the wisdom to be found in the songs of the trees.*

***This disc was a joint venture of the ten choirs listed. Initial funding for this project was provided by the Canada Trust Friends of the Environment and the Shell Canada Limited Environment Fund.***

***Proceeds from the sale of this CD will be used to purchase and maintain trees in the community. All rights are reserved. Unauthorized reproduction, copying or rental of this recording is strictly prohibited by law. All music and lyrics are copyright by Ken Marland ©2000, 204 Poplar Crescent, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada S7M 0A6.***

*Cover Art by Trint Martin-Thomas, Grade 4, St. Matthew School. CD art by Jasmin Martin-Thomas, Grade 2, St. Matthew School.*

*Graphic Design by Gerry Unrau, Colorshape Communications.*

*Production and Musical arrangements by Sheldon Corbett.*

*Recording took place during March 2000 at Audio Art Studio, Saskatoon.*

*Recording Engineer Glenn Enns.*

*Printed by Mister Print. Paper supplied by Coast Paper.*

*A special thank you to the following people whose support made this project possible. Kate Fast Fundraising, Grace Frank Word Processing. Max Abraham Principal, Buena Vista School, Staff of Buena Vista School, Members of the children's choirs and their directors, And especially, Sheldon Corbett, Glenn Enns and Gerry Unrau for their expertise.*